



# UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE  
United States Patent and Trademark Office  
Address: COMMISSIONER FOR PATENTS  
P.O. Box 1450  
Alexandria, Virginia 22313-1450  
www.uspto.gov

APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
10/722,199	11/25/2003	Dwayne Nelson	29757/P-262A	6785

4743 7590 02/27/2006

MARSHALL, GERSTEIN & BORUN LLP  
233 S. WACKER DRIVE, SUITE 6300  
SEARS TOWER  
CHICAGO, IL 60606

EXAMINER

HOTALING, JOHN M

ART UNIT PAPER NUMBER

3714

DATE MAILED: 02/27/2006

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

SP

<b>Office Action Summary</b>	<b>Application No.</b>		<b>Applicant(s)</b>	
	10/722,199		NELSON, DWAYNE	
	<b>Examiner</b>		<b>Art Unit</b>	
	John M. Hotaling II		3714	

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --  
**Period for Reply**

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) OR THIRTY (30) DAYS, WHICHEVER IS LONGER, FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

**Status**

- 1) ☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on 07 October 2005.
- 2a) ☐ This action is **FINAL**.                      2b) ☒ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

**Disposition of Claims**

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 91-113 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) \_\_\_\_\_ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☐ Claim(s) \_\_\_\_\_ is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 91-113 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☐ Claim(s) \_\_\_\_\_ is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) \_\_\_\_\_ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

**Application Papers**

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☐ The drawing(s) filed on \_\_\_\_\_ is/are: a) ☐ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.  
 Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).  
 Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

**Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119**

- 12) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) ☐ All    b) ☐ Some \* c) ☐ None of:
1. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
  2. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. \_\_\_\_\_.
  3. ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

\* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

**Attachment(s)**

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| 1) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)  | 4) <input type="checkbox"/> Interview Summary (PTO-413)<br>Paper No(s)/Mail Date. _____ |
| 2) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)                                   | 5) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152)             |
| 3) <input type="checkbox"/> Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449 or PTO/SB/08)<br>Paper No(s)/Mail Date _____ | 6) <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____  |

## **DETAILED ACTION**

### ***Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103***

The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

Claims 91-96, 98-100, 103-108, 110, 111 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Acres US Patent 6,254,483 in view of Burns et al US Patent 6,048,269. Acres teaches a gaming system that has a display, an input device, a currency accepting mechanism and a controller (Fig. 2) to generate various video games (1:1-3:20). Column 2:18-28 disclose that reconfiguring the primary game and the secondary game is analogous since they are configured in the same manner. With respect to the minimum bet and the denomination for the deposit of currency please see 2:35-55 which discloses being able to vary the wager per unit time and that it is desirable for the casino to set the cost to the player at a higher level during high demand periods and at a lower level, to attract players, during low demand periods. Column 3:24-26 discloses that the method of configuring electronic gaming machines interconnected by a computer network to a host computer and that selected configuration parameters are implemented at each machine. The game machines can be used in a standalone configuration or network configuration and that such configuration parameters control the behavior of the electronic gaming machine (5:47-6:12). Column 6:55-62 teaches of an internal or external clock/time generator and

reconfigures various game parameters based upon a time signal. Various game parameters examples that are changed are rate of game play (6:44), wagering level (6:45), sound level (3:17-20), appearance (3:17-20), a bonus game (8:20-48), payback percentage (8:4). Acres also clearly states the scope of the invention is to change game machine aspects/behaviors with respect to time (3:18) in addition to other such variables. Acres also teaches in the abstract that machine behaviors such as game speed, payback percentage, game appearance are changed in response to a signal from one of a number of variables, such as time (Abstract). Acres furthermore offers more support for the behaviors such as payback percentage modified based upon time (8:49-65). In regard to memory mediums used, Acres teaches using optical (4:3), and various semiconductor memories such as PROMs (5:21) and RAM (5:25) to store various instructions to implement and execute the above-taught game system. Acres clearly states that the game (main/bonus) is changed in accordance with a time signal and that many variables may be changed such as configuration parameters that control the behavior and appearance of the machine in response to time (3:15-20). Changing configuration parameters that control the behavior and appearance of the machine is changing the game in response to time. With respect to changing the bonus game with respect to time see above where Acres discloses that altering the main or bonus games require the same steps and are therefore analogous. Acres lacks in specifically disclosing that the controller change a minimum bet for the video gambling game in response to the time signal. Instead, Acres states that it is desirable to change the level of play. Level of play is defined as 6:35-40 both the current rate and the rate over

a selected time period. The selected time period could be each handle pull or wager and therefore when the level of play changes so does the minimum denomination and/or amount bet. In an analogous game machine to Burns therein is disclosed that it is known and desirable that the use of the system in association with electronic gaming machines eliminates the necessity of having slot machines dedicated to a particular amount of wager. At the present time, the typical casino has slot machines that are dedicated to accept only one value of coin. For example, a slot machine may be a 25 cent machine, accepting only quarters; a 5 cent machine; or a dollar machine. It is very time consuming to physically change the slot machine, which may be desirable during a major event or New Years Eve, when slot machines having higher wager limits are desirable. By use of the subject system, it is possible to change the wager limits of any or all of the individual slot machines. Thus, the minimum wager of the slot machine can be changed at any time. It would also be possible to allow the player to select the wager limit. This permits the casino operators to increase the usefulness of the slot machines to the casino. Previously one player desiring high wager limits than a companion would have to be separated, since the higher limit machines would be separated from the lower limit machines. The current system permits high limit machines to be next to lower limit machines, since all machines can have the values selected by the player. One would be motivated to combine the teachings of Acres and Burns in that acres discloses changing gaming parameters in response to time. Therefor it would be obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art to change the minimum denomination with respect to a time signal.

Claims 101 102 112 and 113 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Acres US Patent 6,254,483 in view of Burns et al US Patent 6,048,269 as shown above in further view of Miura US Patent 6,354,943. Acres discloses all of the instant application as taught above but lacks in specifically teaching that the controller replace at least one of the available gambling games in response to the time signal and specifically stating replacing a first bonus game for a second bonus game. Instead Acres clearly states that the game (main/bonus) is changed in accordance with a time signal and that many variables may be changed such as configuration parameters that control the behavior and appearance of the machine in response to time (3:15-20). Changing configuration parameters that control the behavior and appearance of the machine is changing the game in response to time. With respect to changing the bonus game with respect to time see above where Acres discloses that altering the main or bonus games require the same steps and are therefore analogous. The above is motivation to one skilled in the art to seek a reference that changes the games with an available game in response to time. In an analogous game machine to Miura therein is disclosed changing available games with respect to a time signal. It would be obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art to change the games in Acres with available games (main/bonus) with respect to a time signal as taught in Miura using the above motivation that the game may be changed.

Claims 97 109 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Acres US Patent 6,254,483 in view of Burns et al US Patent 6,048,269 as shown above in further view of Weiss US Patent 5,611,730. Acres discloses all of the instant

Art Unit: 3714

application as taught above but lacks in specifically disclosing "change a maintenance schedule of the gaming unit in response to a time signal. Instead, Acres discloses at the bottom of column 8 that it is to be appreciated that multiple variables may be monitored and multiple configuration parameters may be changed in response to the monitored variables. Maintenance of game machines is inherent to the use of game machines. In an analogous invention to Weiss column 14 and figure 5 discloses a maintenance system which generates maintenance request signals in real time for jackpot and fill notifications provided thru the computer network to a pager of a maintenance person. This is a maintenance request in response to a time signal. In this case the time signal is the real time message forwarded to the computer system. It is also notoriously well known that these types of systems need to have regularly scheduled maintenance performed. It is obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art that the system of Acres could use the maintenance system of Weiss in that computer monitoring of the system of Acres would provide the maintenance people the proper signals for Jackpot and fill notifications as is well known in the art.

### ***Response to Arguments***

Applicant's arguments with respect to claims 91-113 have been considered and have resulted in a combination of Acres and Burns to teach that it is known to change the minimum bet in response to a time signal.

**Conclusion**

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to John M. Hotaling II whose telephone number is (571) 272 4437. The examiner can normally be reached on Mon-Thurs 7:30-6.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Xuan Thai can be reached on (571) 272 3507. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 571-273-8300.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free).

February 21, 2006

**JOHN M. HOTALING, II**  
**PRIMARY EXAMINER**